

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 3-40 are pending in this application and have been rejected in the Office Action dated July 13, 2007. Claims 33-40 have been withdrawn from consideration. By this Amendment, Applicants have amended claims 1, 3, 7, and 8. Support for the claim amendments can be found in the specification and claims as originally filed at pp. 6-7 and 8-9. The amendments introduce no new matter, and thus, their entry is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 3, and 7-10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by Hanamoto et al., (U.S. Patent No. 4,545,752).

Amended claims 1 and 7 recite a "mixture," a "mold apparatus" and "a gap in communication with the cavity and the exterior of the mold apparatus for venting vapor, wherein the cavity is configured to hold the skin of the mixture in contact with the cavity inner surface and the gap, and wherein the gap is configured such that under baking conditions, vapor is vented from the cavity without escape of a significant amount of the mixture from the cavity."

In contrast, Hanamoto teaches "a device for molding articles by injection molding while simultaneously imprinting or transferring patterns on a sheet on the molded articles." Col. 1, ll. 47-49. According to Hanamoto, "prior to the injection of molten plastic material, a softened pattern sheet is pre-molded by pressing said pattern sheet under the air pressure against the cavity surface of a female mold." Id. at ll. 57-60. Indeed, the molten plastic material is injected through the injection device 28 into a cavity defined by the mated male and female molds 16 and 18 and against the pattern sheet 32 which transfers patterns on to the surface of the molded articles or products.

Col. 6, ll. 39-52. Thus, Hanamoto does not teach the configuration of the gaps as required by claims 1 and 7. Instead, Hanamoto requires a pattern sheet 32 for transferring patterns on to the surface of the molded articles or products to be positioned against the cavity surface and air passages 58, i.e., in between the cavity surface and air passages 58 and the molten plastic material. (See Figs. 6-7). Therefore, the presence of the pattern sheet 32 prevents the cavity from being configured to hold a mixture such that the mixture comes into contact with the cavity surface and air passages 58. The office action at page 7 confirms as much by stating, "because of the presen[ce] of the pattern sheet 32, molding material 60 cannot travel through the gap during a normal molding process."

Thus, the claims are not anticipated by Hanamoto, and Applicant respectfully requests that the above rejection be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 4-6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious over Hanamoto et al., (U.S. Patent No. 4,545,752) in view of Oono et al. (6,413,069). Applicant submits that Oono et al. do not correct the deficiencies of Hanamoto et al. discussed above, and as such, the combination of references does not disclose each and every element of the rejected claims.

Furthermore, Applicant disputes the Office Action's contention on page 4, which states, "[i]n regard to claims 5-6 which are related to the sizes of the venting gaps...Hanamoto has recognized that small size of the venting gaps would prevent the trace of the gaps on the surfaces of the product." To the contrary, Hanamoto states that the cavity of the female mold 18 is evacuated, so a plurality of air discharge

passages are not necessary. Therefore, because fewer air passages are used the trace of the air passages is "almost not left on the surfaces of molded articles." Col. 6, ll. 23-30. There is no recognition in Hanamoto that a small sized venting gap would prevent the trace of such gaps on the surface of a product. Hanamoto merely attempts to limit the number of air passages to minimize the imprints of the air passages. Thus, the claims are not rendered obvious by the cited references, and Applicant respectfully requests that the above rejections be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Additionally, Claims 11-32 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious over by Hanamoto et al., (U.S. Patent No. 4,545,752) and further in view of Atake (6,220,849). Applicant submits that Atake also does not correct the deficiencies of Hanamoto et al. which were discussed above, and as such, the combination of references does not disclose each and every element of the rejected claims and does not render the claims obvious. Furthermore, claims 13-14, 19-20, 25-26, and 30-31 in particular are not obvious for the additional reasons discussed above. Namely, there is no recognition in Hanamoto that a small sized venting gap would prevent the trace of such gaps on the surface of a product. Thus, the claims are not rendered obvious by the cited references, and Applicant respectfully requests that the above rejections be reconsidered and withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that the claims are in condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

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Respectfully submitted,

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